

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (previously presented) A network for forwarding packets from a source device to a destination device, said network including a plurality of network elements including a plurality of nodes and connecting links, the plurality of nodes including at least one alternative-route-enabled node and at least one non-alternative-route-enabled node, wherein the at least one non-alternative-route-enabled node comprises:

a storage space to store an initial route from the source device to the destination device;

a mechanism to detect failure in a downstream network element in the initial route; and

a forwarder to automatically forward a failure message upstream along the initial route to an alternative-route-enabled node, the failure message causing the alternative-route-enabled node to begin forwarding packets on an alternative route.

2. (original) The node in claim 1, wherein the network is a connection-oriented network with a plurality of established initial routes.

3. (previously presented) The node in claim 2, wherein the plurality of nodes includes a label-switched router.

4. (previously presented) The node in claim 1, wherein the alternative route does not include the downstream network element in the initial route.

5. (canceled)

6. (original) The node in claim 1, wherein the mechanism to detect failure sends communication packets to downstream nodes at regular intervals.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) A method for forwarding packets from a source device to a destination device in a network of interconnected elements including nodes and links, comprising:

determining an initial route, the initial route including at least one alternative-route enabled node and at least one non-alternative-route-enabled node, the at least one alternative-route-enabled node and the at least one non-alternative-route-enabled node storing an initial route from the source device to the destination device;

determining an alternative route by identifying the at least one alternative-route-enabled node in the initial route, identifying downstream interconnected elements, and generating the alternative route based on the identified at least one alternative-route-enabled node and the identified downstream interconnected elements;

forwarding packets on the initial route;

detecting a failed element; and  
automatically forwarding packets on the alternative route without communicating  
with either the source or the destination.

9. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein determining the initial route further  
comprises:

determining a short path from the destination device to the source device within  
the network;

refining the path according to administrative constraints; and

establishing the path as the initial route.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein refining the path comprises rejecting  
the path exceeding bandwidth allocation and hop limit.

11. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein determining the alternative route  
further comprises:

determining a shortest route from a node preceding the failed element to the  
destination device within the network;

refining the route to exclude the failed element on the initial route; and

establishing the alternative route for forwarding packets.

12. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein detecting a failure is conducted locally

by a node preceding the failed element without requiring notification of a master server or an ingress node.

13. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein determining the alternative route comprises:

- reserving bandwidth available on the initial route;
- generating the alternative route by invoking a routing protocol;
- refining the alternative route by excluding the failed element; and
- establishing the alternative route.

14. (previously presented) A method for forwarding packets from a source device to a destination device in a network of interconnected elements including nodes and links, comprising:

- determining an initial route by determining a short path from the destination device to the source device within the network, refining the path according to administrative constraints, and establishing the path as the initial route, the initial route being prioritized to establish a hierarchy for preemption in routing network traffic;

- determining an alternative route;
  - forwarding packets on the initial route;
  - detecting a failed element; and
  - automatically forwarding packets on the alternative route without communicating with either the source or the destination.

15. (original) The method of claim 8, wherein the determining the alternative route comprises checking bandwidth allocation.

16. (original) The method of claim 15, wherein checking bandwidth allocation comprises dynamically balancing capacity of nodes and links.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein determining the alternative route comprises:

reserving bandwidth available on the initial route;

identifying a plurality of nodes associated with the failed element according to network configuration information;

generating the alternative route excluding the failed element and the plurality of nodes;

establishing the alternative route.

18. (previously presented) A method for locally rerouting packets traveling on an established route when a node in a network of interconnected nodes fails, the method comprising:

computing, at select intermediary nodes along the established route, an alternative route leading from the select intermediary node to the destination device of the established route;

storing, at each of the select intermediary nodes, the alternative route;

determining locally that the established route has failed; and  
automatically forwarding packets on the alternative route.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein computing the alternative route comprises:  
reserving bandwidth available on the established route;  
identifying a plurality of nodes associated with the failed node according to network configuration information;  
generating the alternative route excluding the failed node and the plurality of nodes; and  
establishing the alternative route.

20. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein computing the alternative route further comprises:  
locating a set of established routes with a same destination device and same administrative constraints as the established route;  
finding a common node, downstream from the failed node, after which the set of established routes and the established route utilize the same network elements;  
establishing a new route from the common node to the destination device; and  
incorporating the new route into the alternative route.

21. (original) The method of claim 18, wherein determining locally that the

established route has failed is conducted by a signaling protocol.

22. (canceled)

23. (canceled)

24. (previously presented) A network for forwarding packets from a source device to a destination device and including a plurality of intermediate network nodes, the plurality of intermediate network nodes comprising:

at least one first node configured to:

store an initial route from the source device to the destination device and  
at least one alternative route from the source device to the destination device,

detect a failure in a downstream network node in the initial route, and  
automatically forward a packet to a node on one of the at least one  
alternative route in response to detecting the failure; and

at least one second node configured to:

store the initial route,  
detect a failure in a downstream network node in the initial route, and  
forward a failure message to an upstream first node in response to  
detecting the failure, the failure message causing the upstream first node to automatically  
forward a packet to a node on one of the at least one alternative route.